

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 DHA-02 L-03 PRS-01 /052 W

-----112041Z 023475 /73

P R 111825Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7281

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 6522

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SOPN, UR, US

SUBJECT: AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT AND ALLEGED LIMITATION ON EMBASSY
CONTACT WITH SOVIET DISSIDENTS

1. UPI CORRESPONDENT WALLACE, JUST BACK FROM TWO WEEKS IN WASHINGTON, ASKED EMBOFF MAY 11 ABOUT STORY HE HAD HEARED FROM UNNAMED SOURCES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF A "DIRECTIVE" SIGNED BY THE AMBASSADOR WHICH IN EFFECT FORBADE EMBASSY OFFICER FROM HAVING CONTACT WITH SOVIET DISSIDENTS. WALLACE EXPLAINED THAT HE INTENDED TO FILE A STORY IN WHICH HE WOULD CONTRAST DECLARED WILLINGESS OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION TO SPEAK OUT ON HUMAN RIGHTS WITH THE FACT THAT EMBASSY IS NOW LESS INVOLVED WITH DISSIDENTS THAN UNDER THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION. HE ADDED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE AMBASSADOR WAS PERSONALLY OPPOSED TO THE IDEA OF EMBOFFS SEEING DISSIDENTS.

2. EMBOFF (PRESEL) SAID THAT THERE WAS NO SUCH DIRECTIVE SIGNED BY THE AMBASSADOR AND THAT HIS OWN CONTACTS WITH DISSIDENTS CONTINUED ALTHOUGH AT A LOWER LEVEL. HE CITED RECENT IZVESTIYA PIECE AS THE REASON. HE OBSERVED ALSO THAT THE NUMBER OF DISSIDENTS CURRENTLY IN CIRCULATION WAS VERY MUCH SMALLER THAN AT ANY TIME IN THE LAST TWO YEARS.

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3. WALLACE THEN CALLED P&C COUNSELOR AND ASKED WHETHER THE DIRECTIVE EXISTED. IN RESPONSE TO P&C COUNSELOR'S DENIAL, HE SAID THAT HE HAD IT FROM "EXCELLENT AUTHORITIES" THAT ONE HAD RECENTLY BEEN ISSUED AND THAT IT STIPULATED THAT EMBOFFS MUST CLEAR ANY INVITATION FOR DISSIDENTS TO VISIT EMBASSY APARTMENTS. HE ASKED WHETHER THE DIRECTIVE MIGHT HAVE BEEN ISSUED BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE AMBASSADOR.

HE ALSO ASKED WHETHER THERE HAD BEEN ANY CHANGE IN EMBASSY PATTERN OF DISSIDENT CONTACT TO WHICH P&C COUNSELOR RESPONDED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NONE EXCEPT IN INDIVIDUAL CASES, CITING PRESEL. WALLACE THEN SUGGESTED THAT P&C COUNSELOR WAS PERHAPS NOT AWARE OF THE DIRECTIVE, BUT P&C COUNSELOR SAID HE WAS SURE HE WAS FULLY INFORMED. THE LATTER SENT ON TO BRIEF WALLACE ABOUT EMBASSY STANCE TAKEN WITH RESPECT TO FILM SHOWINGS AND ADDED THAT WE HAD RECENTLY PROTESTED TO THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES OVER CASES IN WHICH SOVIET CITIZENS WERE DENIED ACCESS TO CHANCERY AND APARTMENTS.

4. AT END OF BOTH CONVERSATIONS, WALLACE REMAINED UNCONVINCED AND SAID THAT HE INTENDED TO CONTINUE TO DIG IN ORDER TO DO A STORY "CONTRASTING ADMINISTRATION PROTESTIONS WITH FACTS OF EMBASSY CONTACTS."

5. COMMENT: THERE HAS BEEN NO SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN EMBASSY GUIDELINES REGARDING CONTACT WITH DISSIDENTS. THESE CONTACTS HAVE, OF COURSE, BEEN MONITORED MORE CLOSELY IN RECENT MONTHS BECAUSE OF THEIR INCREASED POLITICAL SENSITIVITY, AS THEY SHOULD BE. EMBASSY IS SURPRISED THAT MISINFORMATION ON THIS POINT WOULD HAVE BEEN PURVEYED BY DEPARTMENT OFFICERS AND WOULD APPRECIATE ANY COMMENT DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE.
TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
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Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2569758
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT AND ALLEGED LIMITATION ON EMBASSY CONTACT WITH SOVIET DISSIDENTS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SOPN, UR, US, UPI, (WALLACE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/6fb8ba96-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009